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Cloud forest scorpions: a new species of *Guyanochactas* Lourenço, 1998 (Scorpiones, Chactidae) from Mount Itoupé in French Guiana

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Mount Itoupé;
French Guiana.

Abstract. – A new species of scorpion belonging to the genus *Guyanochactas* Lourenço, 1998 (family Chactidae Pocock, 1893), is described on the basis of one specimen collected in the cloud forest of Mount Itoupé, the second highest peak of French Guiana. *Guyanochactas itoupe* **sp**. **n**. represents the fourth species of the genus reported from French Guiana and the total number of *Guyanochactas* species is now raised to six. The new species is a possible vicariant of *Guyanochactas touroulti* Lourenço, 2018, equally described from a massif formation of French Guiana, the Mitaraka.

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Introduction

Since the beginning of the 1970's a large number of new taxa belonging to the neotropical family Chactidae Pocock, 1893 have been described, including new species but also new genera. The validity of several new genera was often questioned and became a controversial topic (*e.g.* Lourenço, 1986; González-Sponga, 1996; Sissom, 2000). One of these new genera was *Guyanochactas* (Lourenço, 1998) created to accommodate some 'atypical' species previously placed in the genera *Brotheas* C. L. Koch, 1837 and *Broteochactas* Pocock, 1893. The validity of the genus *Guyanochactas* was accepted by Sissom (2000), Lourenço & Pinto da Rocha (2000) and Lourenço (2002a,b). Subsequently, it was rejected by Soleglad & Fet (2003), but revalidated by Prendini & Wheeler (2005). Since then, two new species were described in the genus *Guyanochactas* (Lourenço & Ythier, 2011; Lourenço, 2018). The validity of the genus *Guyanochactas* is again accepted in the present note and an emended diagnosis is proposed, allowing comparison with other Chactidae genera occurring in French Guiana, namely *Brotheas* C. L. Koch, 1837, *Neochactas* Soleglad & Fet, 2003, *Auyantepuia* González-Sponga, 1978, *Hadrurochactas* Pocock, 1893 and *Spinochactas* Lourenço, 2016. The validity of the genus *Auyantepuia* is again accepted in the present note (for more information see Soleglad & Fet, 2003; Prendini & Wheeler, 2005; Lourenço & Qi, 2007; Lourenço & Duhem, 2010; Ythier, 2015, 2018a,b) and we maintain the *status quo* regarding the genus *Neochactas* (*N. delicatus* (Karsch, 1879) occurring in French Guiana was formerly belonging to the genus *Broteochactas* Pocock, 1893) until a new revision of the family Chactidae (Soleglad & Fet, 2003; Prendini & Wheeler, 2005).

A new species belonging to the genus *Guyanochactas* is described on the basis of one female specimen collected in Mount Itoupé, the second highest peak of French Guiana. The specimen was collected in the cloud forest (above 500 m altitude) of the mountain. The new species is a possible vicariant of *Guyanochactas touroulti* Lourenço, 2018, equally described from a massif formation of French Guiana, the Mitaraka.

Material and methods

Illustrations and measurements were produced using a Motic SMZ-171 stereo-microscope with an ocular micrometer, together with a digital camera Tucsen HD Lite, a Canon EOS 7D camera and Adobe Photoshop software. Map was made using maps-for-free.com and Adobe Photoshop software. Measurements follow Stahnke (1970) and are given in mm. Trichobothrial notations follow Vachon (1974) and morphological terminology mostly follows Hjelle (1990). Type material studied herein was collected by scientists of the Parc

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amazonien de Guyane (C. Benoit & H. Delvaux) during a scientific mission in Mount Itoupé from 13-20 January 2021 and will be deposited in the collections of the MNHN (Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle), Paris, France. Collecting permit was provided by the Parc amazonien de Guyane (n°1021-21, dated January 11th, 2021).

Taxonomic treatment

Family **Chactidae** Pocock, 1893

Genus ***Guyanochactas*** Lourenço, 1998

Diagnosis for the genus (emended from Lourenço, 1997; Fig. 1-20).
The following combination of characters differentiates the genus from other Chactidae genera occurring in French Guiana, namely *Brotheas*, *Neochactas*, *Auyantepuia*, *Hadrurochactas* and *Spinochactas*: scorpions of moderate size with a total length of 35 to 65 mm (smaller size in *Spinochactas* with 12 to 15 mm, *Hadrurochactas* with 18 to 26 mm and *Auyantepuia* with 14 to 34 mm); carapace flat, smooth to weakly granulated (convex and moderately to strongly granulated in *Brotheas*); spiracles oval in shape (elongated in *Brotheas*, rounded in *Auyantepuia*, *Hadrurochactas* and *Spinochactas*); telson elongated (more globular in *Brotheas*, *Neochactas*, *Auyantepuia* and *Spinochactas*) without subaculear spine (present in *Hadrurochactas*); pedipalp chela slender with fingers elongated (more bulky in *Brotheas*, *Neochactas* and *Auyantepuia*, with fingers very short compared to chelal length in *Auyantepuia*); leg tarsi with two rows of spinoid setae (long thin setae irregularly positioned in *Neochactas*, *Auyantepuia*, *Hadrurochactas* and *Spinochactas*).

Composition of the genus *Guyanochactas* (in order of description)

- *Guyanochactas goujei* (Vellard, 1932) (Brazil)
- *Guyanochactas gonzalezspongai* (Lourenço, 1983) (French Guiana)
- *Guyanochactas mascarenhasi* (Lourenço, 1988) (Brazil)
- *Guyanochactas flavus* Lourenço & Ythier, 2011 (French Guiana)
- *Guyanochactas touroulti* Lourenço, 2018 (French Guiana)
- *Guyanochactas itoupe* **sp**. **n**. (French Guiana)

Guyanochactas itoupe **sp**. **n**.

(Fig. 9-12, 21-29)

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Holotype, adult ♀, French Guiana, Mount Itoupé, 550 m a.s.l., 13-20/I/2021 (C. Benoit & H. Delvaux). Female holotype. Type material deposited in the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris, France

Etymology. – The specific name is placed in apposition to the generic name and refers to Mount Itoupé, where the new species was collected.

Diagnosis. – Scorpion of moderate size for the genus, with 49.1 mm total length in female holotype. Coloration reddish-brown to blackish. Carapace flat, slightly emarginated, almost smooth with only a few sparse minute granulations laterally; median eyes separated by less than one (0.78) ocular diameter. Tergites and appendages weakly granulated, with minute punctations. Sternites smooth and punctuated, without setation; spiracles oval in shape. Pectines with 9-9 teeth in female holotype; fulcra present. Metasomal segments I and II wider than long; III as long as wide, IV-V longer than wide. Telson elongated and weakly globular; aculeus curved and moderately elongated. Chela slender; dentate margins of movable and fixed fingers with 7 and 6 rows of granules, respectively. Trichobothrial pattern of type C, neobothriotaxic 'majorante'. Leg tarsi with two rows of spinoid setae.

Description of the female holotype

Coloration (in alcohol). – Basically, reddish-brown to blackish. Prosoma: carapace dark brown to blackish with some reddish-brown zones on furrows; eyes blackish. Tergites dark brown to blackish, with confluent reddish-brown zones. Metasomal segments reddish-brown with blackish pigmentation over carinae; telson reddish-yellow with diffuse dark brown pigmentation; aculeus reddish at the base and blackish at the tip. Chelicerae yellowish with brownish variegated pigmentation; fingers brownish and teeth reddish to reddish yellow. Pedipalps reddish-brown with blackish pigmentation over carinae; femur darker than patella and chela. Legs reddish yellow with diffuse brownish pigmentation on trochanter, femur and patella. Venter: sternites, coxapophysis and sternum yellowish-brown, sternite VII darker; pectines and genital operculum yellowish to yellowish-brown.

Morphology. – Carapace flat, slightly emarginated, almost smooth with only a few sparse minute granulations laterally; minute punctuations except on furrows; furrows shallow. Median eyes largely anterior to the centre of the carapace, separated by less than one (0.78) ocular diameter; two pairs of lateral eyes, moderate in size. Tergites acarinate, with only minute granulations and punctations. Sternum pentagonal, wider than long. Pectinal tooth count 9-9; fulcra present. Sternites smooth and punctuated, without setation; spiracles oval in shape. Metasomal segments I to II wider than long, III as wide as long, IV-V longer than wide; metasomal tegument with moderately marked granulations and a few punctuations; dorsal carinae strongly marked on all segments with spinoid granules; other carinae moderately marked on segments III-V, weaker on segments I-II; segment V with spinoid granulations ventrally. Telson elongated and weakly globular with moderately marked granulation ventrally; aculeus curved and moderately elongated. Pedipalps: femur with minute granulations and punctations; dorsal internal, dorsal external and ventral internal carinae moderately marked; ventral external carina weakly to moderately marked. Patella with minute granulations and punctations; dorsal internal, ventral internal, ventral external and external carinae weakly to moderately marked; other carinae vestigial. Chela slender, with weakly marked carinae and a few granulations on internal aspect. Dentate margins of movable and fixed fingers with 7 and 6 rows of granules, respectively, separated by stronger accessory granules. Chelicerae moderately elongated with a dentition typical of the family Chactidae (Vachon, 1963), and with dense setation ventrally and internally. Trichobothriotaxy of type C, neobothriotaxic 'majorante' (Vachon, 1974). Leg tarsi with two rows of spinoid setae.

Comparative morphometric values (mm) **of the female holotypes of *Guyanochactas itoupe* sp. n. and *Guyanochactas touroulti*** (in this order).

- **Total length** (including telson) 49.1/36.4.
- **Carapace**
  length 7.0/5.1;
  anterior width 4.1/3.2;
  posterior width 7.0/5.2.
- **Mesosoma**: length 16.3/11.9.
- **Metasomal segments**
  I: length 2.4/2.0, width 3.8/3.0;
  II: length 2.8/2.3, width 3.5/2.6;
  III: length 3.1/2.4, width 3.3/2.4;
  IV: length 4.0/2.9, width 3.1/2.3;
  V: length, 7.0/4.9, width 3.0/2.1, depth 2.6/1.7.
- **Telson**: length 6.5/4.9.
- **Vesicle**: width 2.1/1.6, depth 1.8/1.3.
- **Pedipalp**
  femur: length 5.3/3.8, width 2.5/1.7;
  patella: length 5.8/4.4, width 2.6/1.8;
  chela: length 12.0/8.5, width 3.9/2.8, depth 4.0/2.9;
  movable finger length 6.5/4.2.

Relationships. – *Guyanochactas itoupe* **sp**. **n**. can be distinguished from other species of the genus *Guyanochactas* and particularly from *G. gonzalezspongai*, *G. flavus* and *G. touroulti*, also distributed in French Guiana, by the following main features:

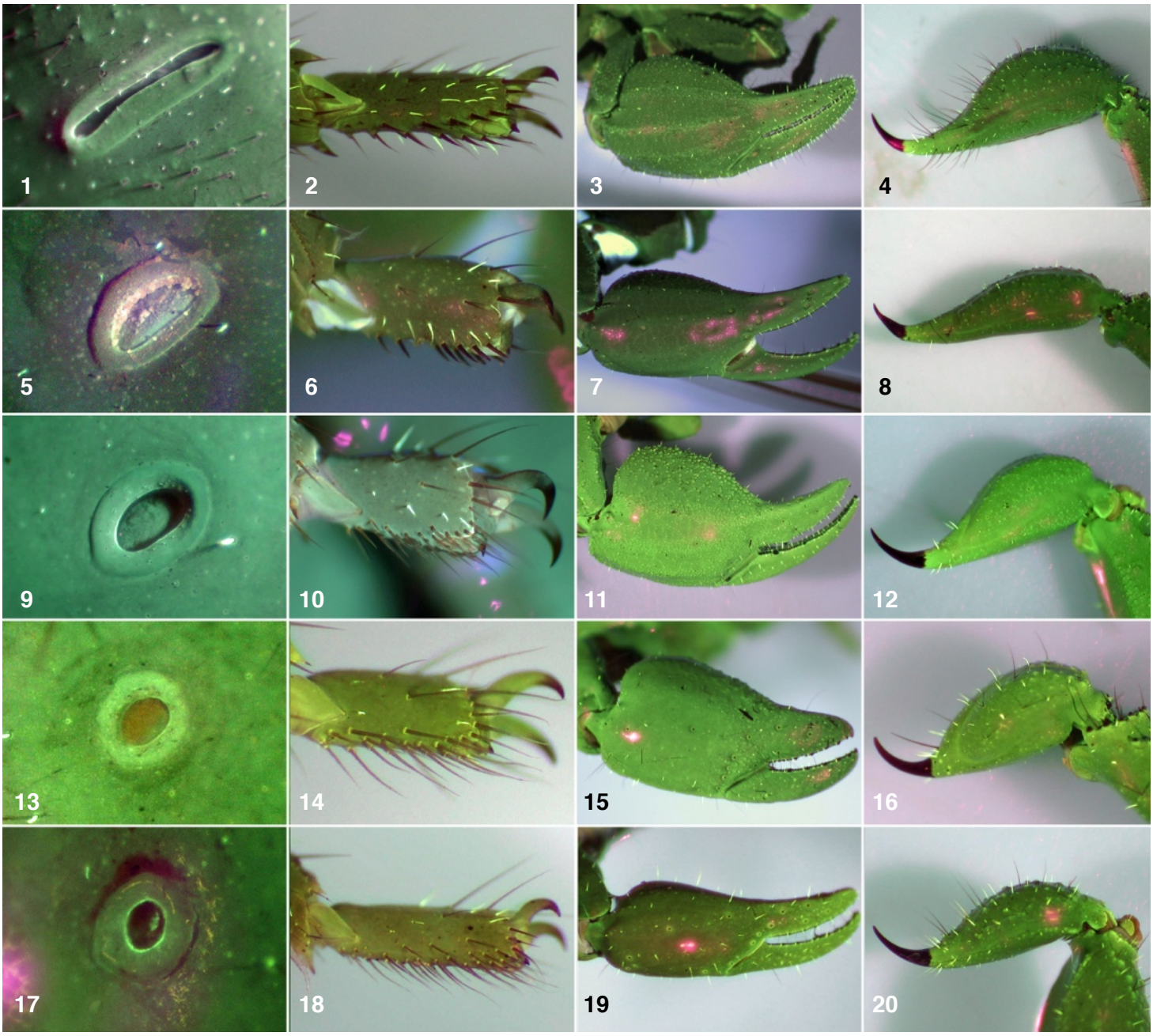

Fig. **1-20**. Spiracle on sternite V (**1**, **5**, **9**, **13**, **17**), tarsus of leg IV (**2**, **6**, **10**, **14**, **18**), chela, external aspect (**3**, **7**, **11**, **15**, **19**) and telson, lateral aspect (**4**, **8**, **12**, **16**, **20**) of females of the Chactidae genera occurring in French Guiana, except *Spinochactas*. **1-4**. *Brotheas* (*B. granulatus* Simon, 1877). **5-8**. *Guyanochactas* (*G. itoupe* **sp**. **n**.). **9-12**. *Neochactas* (*N. delicatus* (Karsch, 1879)). **13-16**. *Auyantepuia* (*A. laurae* Ythier, 2015). **17-20**. *Hadrurochactas* (*H. schaumii* (Karsch, 1880)). Photographs under 365 nm UV light.

(**i**) scorpion of moderate size with 49.1 mm total length in female holotype (females smaller in *G. flavus* with 35 to 38 mm and *G. touroulti* with 36.4 mm);

(**ii**) coloration reddish brown to blackish (reddish yellow to pale yellow in *G. gonzalezspongai* and *G. flavus*);

(**iii**) chelicerae yellowish with brownish variegated pigmentation (no pigmentation in *G. flavus*);

(**iv**) median eyes separated by less than one (0.78) ocular diameter (one diameter in *G. flavus*, more than one diameter in *G. touroulti*, one and a half diameter in *G. gonzalezspongai*);

(**v**) sternites without setation (sternite III with strong setation in female *G. flavus*);

(**vi**) pectines with fulcra present (vestigial in *G. touroulti*, absent in *G. gonzalezspongai* and *G. flavus*);

(**vii**) metasomal segment III as long as wide (longer than wide in *G. gonzalezspongai*);

(**viii**) pedipalp femur with carina weakly to moderately marked (better marked in *G. touroulti*);

(**ix**) dentate margins of chela movable and fixed fingers with 7 and 6 rows of granules, respectively (6-6 in *G. gonzalezspongai* and *G. touroulti*, 5-5 in *G. flavus*).

Biogeographic comments. – Mount Itoupé is a mountain belonging to a massif of tabular mountains located in southern French Guiana (south-east of Saül, between Maripasoula and Camopi), in the heart area of the Parc amazonien de Guyane (Guiana Amazonian Park). With an altitude of 826 m, it is the second summit of French Guiana after Mountain Bellevue (831 m). The top of the mountain (from 500 m) is covered by a high-altitude forest frequently shrouded in clouds and mist (cloud forest), presenting a unique biodiversity with a high level of endemism (Fig. 30-31).

In previous publications (*e.g.* Lourenço, 2018) it was commented that many summits in French Guiana could be defined as typical inselberg formations. Inselbergs (from German ‘insel = island’ and ‘berg =

Fig. **21**-**22**. *Guyanochactas itoupe* **sp**. **n**., female holotype, habitus, dorsal (**21**) and ventral (**22**) aspects. Scale bar = 1 cm.

mountain') are isolated rocky outcrops generally consisting of Precambrian granite or gneiss. This is the precise situation of the Mitaraka massif in southern French Guiana (Granville, 1991) from which was recently described *Guyanochactas touroulti* Lourenço, 2018 (Lourenço, 2018) (Fig. 32). The geomorphology and geology of inselbergs have been studied worldwide (Sarthou *et al*., 2003, 2010) and a survey was provided (Bremer & Sander, 2000). These shaped inselbergs are scattered throughout Guiana and Brazilian Shields (up to eastern Bolivia). These outcrops rise abruptly from the surrounding plain landscape and represent singular habitats in tropical rain forests (Sarthou *et al*., 2003, 2010). Another geological formation which is exclusively located in the Guayana region (mostly in Venezuela, western Guyana and northern Brazil) are the tepuys, composed of large plateau of Precambrian quartz arenite sandstone that rise abruptly from the jungle. Mount Itoupé is rather defined as a tabular mountain, consisting of basic rocks covered with a lateritic crust sometimes very thick, with a table summit and moderate slopes covered by forest. Such tabular mountains are particularly present in French Guiana and to a lesser extent, in Suriname and Guyana (Delnatte, 2011; Granville, 1986, 1989, 1991).

All these formations represent clear habitat fragmentation and constitute functional terrestrial islands (Prance, 1996) which contain rare endemic species, in most cases due to isolation and particular environmental conditions (Sarthou *et al*., 2003; MacArthur & Wilson, 1967). When the Amazon rainforest cover was reduced during past arid periods, open vegetation formations probably coalesced while the forested cover remained on such reliefs due to elevation causing the humid air to cool so that condensation and consequent precipitation took place (Andrade-Lima, 1982), presumably serving as paleoclimatic refugia for some animal and plant populations (Granville, 1979; Lourenço & Ythier, 2025).

The biogeographic pattern observed for *Guyanochactas itoupe* **sp**. **n**. from Mount Itoupé and *G. touroulti* from Mitaraka massif clearly supports the definition of typical vicariant elements, which probably knew past periods of contact (Prance, 1996). The presence of some *Guyanochactas* species in Brazil, but in more open vegetation formations (Lourenço, 2002a,b), can also suggest a primary adaptation of this scorpion group to less dense forested formations.

Conservation. – With a land area of 3,4 million hectares, the Parc amazonien de Guyane, located in southern French Guiana, covers 40% of the territory and is the largest national park in France as well as in the European Union (Fig. 32). This protected area covers 2 million hectares for the core area (hearth zone, where full protection

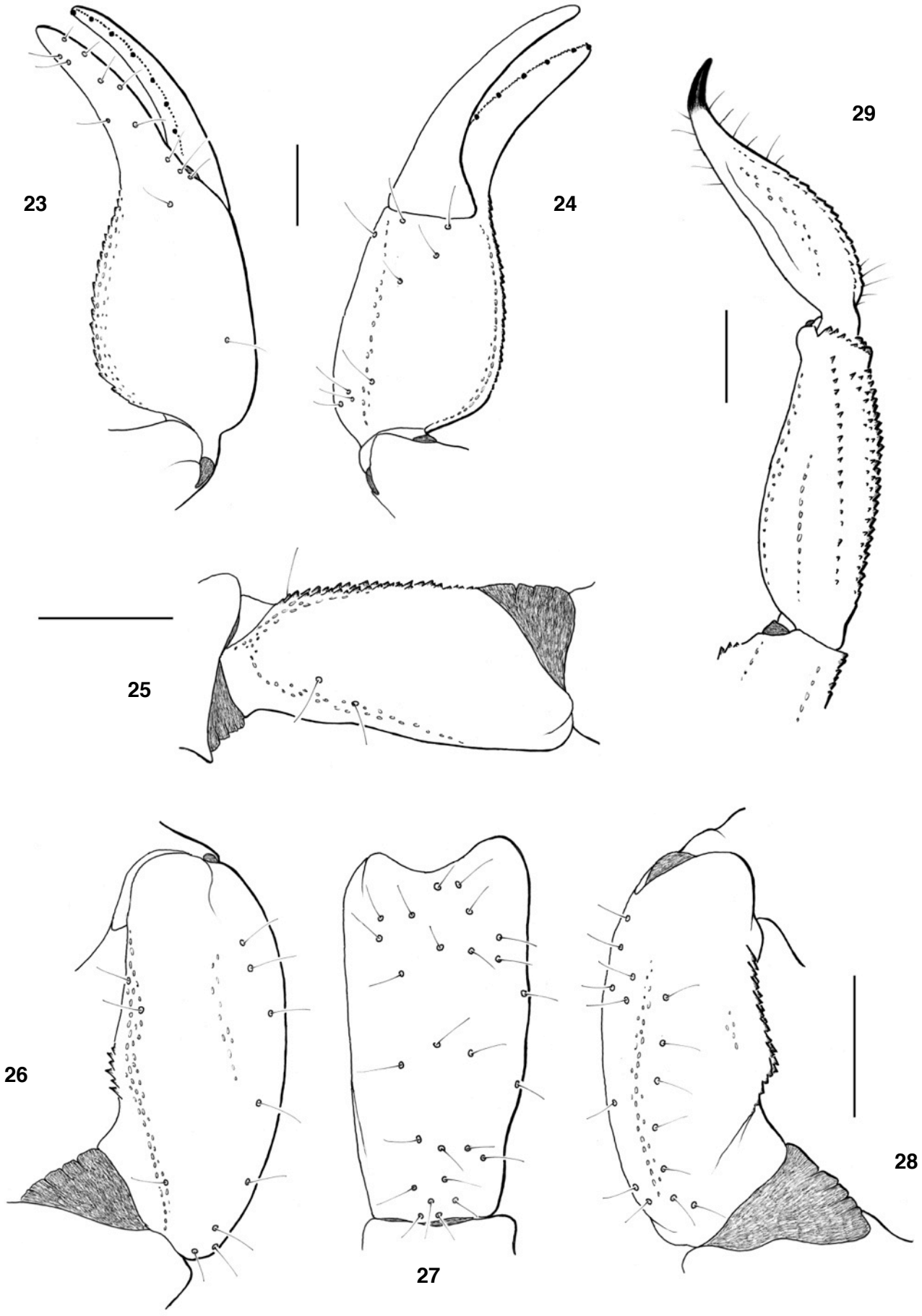

Fig. **23**-**29**. *Guyanochactas itoupe* **sp**. **n**., female holotype. **23**-**27**. Trichobothrial pattern. **23**-**24**. Chela, dorso-external (**23**) and ventral (**24**) aspects. **25**. Femur, dorsal aspect. **26**-**28**. Patella, dorsal (**26**), external (**27**) and ventral (**28**) aspects. **29**. Metasomal segment V and telson, lateral aspect. Scale bars = 2 mm.

Fig. **30**. Cloud forest on the summit of Mount Itoupé, type locality of *Guyanochactas itoupe* **sp**. **n**.

is enforced) and 1,4 million hectares for the secondary area (membership zone). Put together with the neighbouring Parque Nacional Montanhas do Tumucumaque in Brazil covering 3,9 million hectares, it represents the biggest rainforest protected area in the world. Due to a limited number of scientific missions which included scorpions among studied organisms, the scorpion fauna of the Parc amazonien de Guyane remains poorly known. However, some biodiversity surveys conducted over the past decade allowed the collection of few scorpion specimens and the description of nine new species, showing a remarkable diversity of the scorpion fauna in this protected area. Moreover, among a total of 23 species occurring in the Parc amazonien de Guyane (Ythier & Dupré, 2024), 15 species are currently considered to be endemic, namely (in order of description) *Auyantepuia sissomi* Lourenço, 1983, *Guyanochactas gonzalezspongai* (Lourenço, 1983), *Ananteris sabinae* Lourenço, 2001, *Microananteris minor* Lourenço, 2003, *Ananteris polleti* Lourenço, 2016, *Spinochactas mitaraka* Lourenço, 2016, *Auyantepuia aurum* Ythier, 2018, *Guyanochactas touroulti* Lourenço, 2018, *Ananteris mamilihpan* Ythier, Chevalier & Lourenço, 2020, *Microananteris inselberg* Lourenço, 2021, *Microananteris abounami* Lourenço & Chevalier, 2022, *Spinochactas camopi* Lourenço, Chevalier & Ythier, 2022, *Hadrurochactas tumucumaque* Ythier & Lourenço, 2024 and *Guyanochactas itoupe* **sp**. **n**. (Chevalier, 2020, 2022; Ythier & Dupré, 2024), as well as a new species of *Auyantepuia* to be described in a forthcoming article about this genus in French Guiana (Ythier *et al*., in press).

Such a high biodiversity despite a limited survey, combined with an important level of endemism, highlight the importance of the role of the Parc amazonien de Guyane in preserving and protecting this area, as well as the need of further surveys focusing on scorpions in order to increase our knowledge about their diversity, ecology and biology, as well as define potential conservation status for some species.

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Fig. **31**. Scientific camp of the Parc amazonien de Guyane in Mount Itoupé, near the type locality of *Guyanochactas itoupe* **sp**. **n**.

Fig. **32**. Topographic map of French Guiana showing the known distribution of *Guyanochactas* species, and the limits of the Parc amazonien de Guyane (Guiana Amazonian Park; white line).

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Author of the figures. – EY (except Fig. 30-31 and couverture, see Credits)

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Résumé

Ythier E., Chevalier J. & Lourenço W. R., 2025. – Scorpions des forêts de nuages : une nouvelle espèce de *Guyanochactas* Lourenço, 1998 (Scorpiones, Chactidae) du Mont Itoupé en Guyane Française. *Faunitaxys*, 13(48): 1 – 9.

Une nouvelle espèce appartenant au genre *Guyanochactas* Lourenço, 1998 (Chactidae Pocock, 1893), est décrite sur la base d'un spécimen collecté sur le Mont Itoupé, le second plus grand sommet de Guyane Française. *Guyanochactas itoupe* **sp**. **n**. représente la quatrième espèce de *Guyanochactas* décrite pour la Guyane, et le nombre total d'espèces appartenant à ce genre est porté à six. La nouvelle espèce est un possible vicariant géographique de *Guyanochactas touroulti* Lourenço, 2018, également décrit d'un massif guyanais, le Mitaraka.

Mots-clés. – Scorpions, Chactidae, *Guyanochactas*, morphologie, taxonomie, description, nouvelle espèce, endémisme; conservation, forêt de nuages, Mont Itoupé, Guyane Française.

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Illustration de la couverture :

Cloud forest on the summit of Mount Itoupé, French Guiana, type locality of *Guyanochactas itoupe* **sp**. **n**.

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Eric Ythier : Fig. 1-29, 32.
Aurélien Brusini : Fig. 30 et couverture.
Emeric Auffret (Parc amazonien de Guyane) : Fig. 31.

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